



The Connecticut Association of Schools

The Connecticut Association of Schools provides exemplary programs and services that promote excellence in the education of all children.

Testimony

Proposed Bill No. 26: AN ACT EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) has a membership of over 1100 elementary and secondary schools in Connecticut. We advocate for the best interests of schools, students, faculty and administrators through supporting a wide range of activities from academics to athletic. We provide extensive professional development programs for school leaders.

The Connecticut Association of Schools supports the development of the new Office of Early Childhood. However, we believe that the definition of "early childhood" be considered from birth to age 8. This supports current research about early childhood education as well as many initiatives at both the state and national levels that define early childhood years as birth through age 8. The Office of Early Childhood is slated to have statutory authority to age 5. There needs to be a formal structure to insure that the early childhood experts in the Office of Early Childhood work collaboratively with the State Department of Education and other educational agencies on all initiatives related to Pre-K through 12 education which apply to the early childhood years (birth to grade 3).

Examples include: Alliance districts be given guidance about Early Childhood Education as a turn around strategy, Project Lead to include an Early Childhood component, Teacher Evaluation conversations be continued, and charter and magnet school applications that include preK-3 should be reviewed by an Early Childhood Education specialist. These are just some examples of the collaborative needs to ensure the bridge from birth to grade 3.

We suggest that there be something in statute about the requirement of the Office of Early Childhood to be a partner with the CT State Department of Education in the support of and accountability for Pre-K in public schools and additionally, required to have substantive involvement/influence in all statewide initiatives and structures that impact through age 8 (grade 3). Possibly a requirement that a staff member be

assigned as an inter-agency liaison, helping to make sure that the work in lower elementary has the right expertise attached.

The Connecticut Association of Schools stands ready to assist the Legislature and the Office of Early Childhood Education in the collaboration and support in our schools for children in their early childhood years